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AN ANALYSIS OF RECIDIVISM AMONG RESIDENTS RELEASED  
FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS HALFWAY HOUSES, INC.  
1977 AND 1978 RELEASES

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS  
COLLECTION

JUN 3 1981

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July, 1980

PUBLICATION #12033

Approved by: Alfred C. Holland, State Purchasing Agent

304/24



## ABSTRACT

This report analyzes recidivism rates for individuals who were released from facilities operated by the Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc. (MHHI) during 1977 and 1978.

For the combined sample of 1977 and 1978 MHHI releases, 36 individuals out of 306 had been reincarcerated during the one-year follow-up period giving a recidivism rate of 12%. For those individuals who had been released during 1977, 21 of the 185 individuals had been reincarcerated, giving a recidivism rate of 11%. One-hundred, twenty-one individuals were released during 1978 and 15 of them had been reincarcerated during the one-year follow-up giving a recidivism rate of 12%.

Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc. pre-release program participants had statistically significantly lower rates of recidivism for 1977 releases and for the combined sample of 1977 and 1978 releases than their expected rates. For the 1978 releases, the MHHI pre-release program participants had a lower actual rate of recidivism than the expected rate but the difference was not statistically significant.



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## INTRODUCTION

Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc. (MHHI) was originally established in 1964. It founded Brooke House, the state's first residence for male ex-offenders from state and federal prisons. Since 1972, the Massachusetts Department of Correction has contracted with Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc. to provide beds for offenders in the system.

This report is the third component of a three-part evaluation of residents released from MHHI on a pre-release basis during 1977 and 1978. The first report was a client profile of those residents as well as a statistical breakdown of background characteristics of program participants according to their classification as program completers or program non-completers.<sup>1</sup> The second component was an analysis of this same sample in terms of the basic statistical differences between individuals who were program completers and those who were program non-completers.<sup>2</sup> This report is a one-year recidivism evaluation for those residents released from MHHI during 1977 and 1978. The previous report of the MHHI population indicated that for the MHHI residents released in 1974, the recidivism rate was 10%.<sup>3</sup> The most recent recidivism report indicates that the overall recidivism rate for the total releases has decreased from 30% in 1966 to 15% in 1977.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Williams, Lawrence T., Client Profile Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc. 1977 and 1978 Releases, Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 187, May, 1980.

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<sup>2</sup>Williams, Lawrence T., A Profile of Characteristics Distinguishing Between Program Completers and Program Non-Completers at Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc. 1977 and 1978 Releases, Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 188, May, 1980.

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<sup>3</sup>Landolfi, Joseph, An Analysis of Recidivism Among Residents Released From the Pre-Release Centers Administered by Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc., Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 119, June, 1976.

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<sup>4</sup>Smart, Yvette, An Analysis of Recidivism Rates Among Residents Released From Mass. Correctional Institutions During 1977, Mass. DOC Publication No. 182, November, 1979.



METHODOLOGY

Research Question:

The study will address the following research question:

Are those individuals who ended their terms of incarceration in a MHHI Pre-Release facility less likely to be reincarcerated within one-year of their release than are similar types of inmates who did not participate in a pre-release program prior to release?

Samples:

For the purpose of this study, a population consisting of residents released from MHHI facilities (577 House, 699 House, Temporary Housing Project, Coolidge House, and Brooke House) during the years 1977 and 1978 was chosen as the sample. The analysis will be done on the combined sample of both 1977 and 1978 releases, 1977 releases only, and 1978 releases only. The breakdown of the samples for the combined group, as well as for each releasing year is presented in Table I.

TABLE I

MASSACHUSETTS HALFWAY HOUSES, INC., 1977 & 1978 RELEASES

	1977		1978		COMBINED SAMPLE	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
577 House	57	( 31)	36	( 30)	93	( 30)
699 House	48	( 26)	34	( 28)	82	( 27)
Temporary Housing	34	( 18)	12	( 10)	46	( 15)
Coolidge House	15	( 8)	17	( 14)	32	( 11)
Brooke House	31	( 17)	22	( 18)	53	( 17)
TOTAL	185	(100)	121	(100)	306	(100)



Outcome Measure:

In measuring the reduction of further criminal behavior, the standard used will be recidivism rates. A recidivist is defined as any subject who is returned to a federal or state correctional institution or to a county jail or house of correction for 30 days or more as a result of either a parole violation or a new court sentence. The follow-up period will be one full year from the date of the subject's release from a MHHI facility.

Base Expectancy Tables:

Due to the possibility of a non-random selection process in the assignment of clients to pre-release programs, an additional comparison between the MHHI sample and the control sample will be made. Specifically, Expected Rates of Recidivism will be constructed for the control sample and applied to the MHHI samples of combined 1977 and 1978 releases, 1977 releases only, and 1978 releases only. The Expected Rates of Recidivism for the pre-release sample will be compared to the Actual Rates of Recidivism of the MHHI sample. Tests of statistical significance will be used in these comparisons to determine whether a low or high risk population was chosen in the process of the selection for program participants.

Data Collection:

Data collected for all samples consists of (1) commitment variables, (2) personal background variables, (3) criminal history variables, (4) furlough variables, and (5) recidivism variables. This material was collected from the computerized data base developed by the Correction and Parole Management Information System (CAPMIS). Additional data



was collected from the files of the Department of Correction, the Parole Board, and the Board of Probation. The data was analyzed on the Massachusetts State College Computer Network (MSCCN).







## FINDINGS

### Results of Recidivism Follow-up Analyses

#### A. MHHI Samples - Combined 1977 and 1978 Releases

Of the 306 individuals who had participated in and successfully completed one of the MHHI programs during 1977 and 1978, 270 individuals were not returned to a federal or state correctional institution or to a county jail or house of correction for 30 days or more within one year of follow-up. The remaining 36 were reincarcerated during this follow-up period. Thus, the overall recidivism rate for the combined MHHI sample of 1977 and 1978 releases was 12%.

For the 577 House program completion sample, 5 of the 93 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release; the recidivism rate for the combined 577 House sample was therefore 5%.

For the 699 House program completion sample, 23 of the 82 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. This yields a recidivism rate for the combined 699 House sample of 28%.

For the Temporary Housing Project completion sample, 2 of the 46 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. As a result, the recidivism rate for the combined Temporary Housing Project sample was 4%.

For the Coolidge House program completion sample, only one individual out of the 32 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. This yields a recidivism rate for the combined Coolidge House sample of 3%.



For the Brooke House program completion sample, 5 individuals out of the 53 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. As a result, the recidivism rate for the combined Brooke House sample was 9%.

B. MHHI Sample - 1977 Releases

Of the 185 individuals who had participated in and successfully completed one of the MHHI programs in 1977, 21 individuals were returned to a federal or state correctional institution or to a county jail or house of correction for 30 days or more within one year of follow-up. Thus, the overall recidivism rate for the sample of releases from MHHI during 1977 was 11%.

For the 577 House program completion sample, 2 of the 57 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release; the recidivism rate for the 1977 release from 577 House was therefore 4%.

For the 699 House program completion sample, 12 of the 48 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. As a result, the recidivism rate for the 1977 releases from 699 House was 25%.

For the Temporary Housing Project completion sample, 2 of 34 releases in 1977 had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. This yields a recidivism rate of 6%.

For the Coolidge House program completion sample, only one of the 15 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of his release into the community from the program. As a result, the recidivism rate for the 1977 releases from Coolidge House was 7%.



Upon examining the Brooke House 1977 releases, 4 of the 31 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. This yields a recidivism rate of 13%.

C. MHHI Sample - 1978 Releases

Of the 121 individuals who had participated in and successfully completed one of the MHHI programs in 1978, 15 individuals were returned to a federal or state correctional institution or to a county jail or house of correction for 30 days or more within one year of follow-up. Thus, the overall recidivism rate for the sample of 1978 releases from MHHI was 12%.

For the 577 House program completion sample, 3 of the 36 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. This yeilds a recidivism rate of 8%.

For 699 House program completion sample, 11 of the 34 individuals had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release from 699 House. As a result, the recidivism rate for those people released from 699 House in 1978 was 32%.

Upon examining the Temporary Housing Project completion sample, none of the 12 releases had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release; this gives a recidivism rate of 0%.

For the Coolidge House program completion sample in 1978, there were not any individuals among the 17 releases who had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release from Coolidge House in 1978 of 0%.

The Brooke House completion sample in 1978 had only one of the 22 releases who had been reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. As a result, the recidivism rate was 5%.

These results are summarized in Table II.



TABLE II

MASSACHUSETTS HALFWAY HOUSES, INC. RECIDIVISM RATES - PROGRAM COMPLETION SAMPLE

	577 HOUSE	699 HOUSE	TEMPORARY HOUSING	COOLIDGE HOUSE	BROOKE HOUSE	TOTAL
A. Combined 1977 & 1978 Releases						
1. Number of Individuals	93	82	46	32	53	306
2. Number of Recidivists	5	23	2	1	5	36
3. Recidivism Rate	5%	28%	4%	3%	9%	12%
B. 1977 Releases Only						
1. Number of Individuals	57	48	34	15	31	185
2. Number of Recidivists	2	12	2	1	4	21
3. Recidivism Rate	4%	25%	6%	7%	13%	11%
C. 1978 Releases Only						
1. Number of Individuals	36	34	12	17	22	121
2. Number of Recidivists	3	11	0	0	1	15
3. Recidivism Rate	8%	32%	0%	0%	5%	12%







These recidivism rates for MHHI facilities are low when compared to the recidivism rates of those released from walled institutions. The most recent recidivism figures available for the releases from the walled institutions are for the releases in the year 1977.<sup>5</sup> For that year, the combined recidivism rate for MCI's Walpole, Concord, Framingham, and Norfolk was 20%. By separate institution, the recidivism rates ranged from a low of 14% to a high of 25%. These figures are presented in Table III.

TABLE III

RECIDIVISM RATES BY RELEASING INSTITUTION 1977

<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF RELEASES</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
Walpole	118	( 10)	25%
Concord	252	( 22)	18%
Norfolk	76	( 7)	15%
Framingham, Men	1	( 0)	0%
Framingham, Women	107	( 9)	23%
Forestry Camps	57	( 5)	14%
SECC <sup>6</sup>	44	( 4)	20%
Pre-Release Centers	473	( 42)	8%
Other <sup>7</sup>	10	( 1)	22%
TOTAL	1138	(100)	15%

<sup>5</sup> Smart, Yvette, An Analysis of Recidivism Rates Among Residents Released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions in 1977, Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 182, November, 1979.

<sup>6</sup> Southeastern Correctional Center (SECC).

<sup>7</sup> Other includes Reception Diagnostic Centers, Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, Bridgewater State Hospital, and Medfield Prison Project.



D. Expected Rates of Recidivism Compared to Actual Rates

At this point, it is important to analyze the MHHI pre-release population in terms of selection factors to determine whether or not low risk recidivists were in fact selected for transfer into the MHHI facilities.<sup>8</sup> This was accomplished through the use of base expectancy tables determining the expected recidivism rates for the MHHI pre-release population. The specific base expectancy table utilized was constructed on a population of individuals released from Massachusetts Department of Correction facilities during the year 1976.<sup>8</sup> This table is presented as Table IV; the specific risk categories are summarized and presented as Table V.

<sup>8</sup> Metzler, Charles and Wittenberg, Shari, The Development of Validated Base Expectancy Tables, Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 160, December, 1978.



TABLE IV

## VALIDATED POST INCARCERATION BASE EXPECTANCY TABLE

1976 Releases Total Sample RR = 16%	1 or fewer successful furloughs RR = 28%	Time served 13 months or more RR = 44%
		Time served 12 months or less RR = 23%
	2 or more successful furloughs RR = 12%	Age at Release 30 years or younger RR = 16%
		Age at release 31 years or older RR = 2%



TABLE V  
POST INCARCERATION

CATEGORY NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	RECIDIVISM RATE
I	One or fewer successful furloughs and time served 13 months or more	44%
II	One or fewer successful furloughs and time served 12 months or less	23%
III	Two or more successful furloughs and age at release 30 years or younger	16%
IV	Two or more successful furloughs and age at release 31 years or older	2%





Base expectancy risk categories as summarized in Table V above, were applied to the combined MHHI pre-release population of individuals released in 1977 and 1978, 1977 releases only, and 1978 releases only. This procedure resulted in an expected recidivism rate of 16.59% for the combined sample of 1977 and 1978 releases, 16.73% for the releases in 1977 only, and 16.38% for the releases in 1978 only. Since the recidivism rate for the control sample was 16% and the differences are not significant, one can conclude that low recidivism risks were not chosen for participation in MHHI programs in 1977 or 1978.

When we compare the expected rates of recidivism with the actual rates of recidivism for MHHI programs, we see that those individuals released from MHHI programs in 1977 and 1978, and the combined sample, had considerably lower rates than expected. The difference between the expected rate and actual rate for the combined sample of 1977 and 1978 releases, as well as the difference between the expected rate and actual rate for the 1977 releases was statistically significant at the .05 significance level. The difference between the expected rate and actual rate for the 1978 releases was not statistically significant at the .05 significance level. These findings are summarized in Table VI. <sup>9</sup>

TABLE VI

MHHI EXPECTED RATES OF RECIDIVISM VS. ACTUAL RATES OF RECIDIVISM

	1977 Releases	1978 Releases	Combined 1977 & 1978 Releases
Expected Rates	16.73%	16.38%	16.59%
Actual Rates	11.00%	12.00%	12.00%
$\chi^2$	3.854	1.402	5.152



It is also possible to compare the expected rates of recidivism for the combined sample to the actual recidivism rates. This is done in Table VII.

TABLE VII

EXPECTED RATES VS. ACTUAL RATES  
SPECIFIC MASSACHUSETTS HALFWAY HOUSES, INC. INSTITUTION

	<u>577 HOUSE</u>	<u>699 HOUSE</u>	<u>TEMPORARY HOUSING</u>	<u>COOLIDGE HOUSE</u>	<u>BROOKE HOUSE</u>
Expected Rate	15.49%	18.71%	15.44%	14.19%	17.85%
Actual Rate	5.00%	28.00%	4.00%	3.00%	9.00%

As can be seen from Table VII, the majority of the MHHI programs have much lower actual rates of recidivism than would be expected. However, 699 House is the exception to this statement. For that particular program, the actual rate of recidivism is much higher than the expected rate. This result held for both the 1977 releases and

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It is important to note that these figures for the expected rates are conservative ones. This is due to the fact that the risk categories used in computing the expected rates of recidivism include the furlough variable, which is a program variable that is being examined. This gives more strength to the results because the effect of furloughs tends to be isolated and this produces much more meaningful results.



1978 releases as well as for the combined sample. A further analysis was done, excluding the 699 House sample from the results. The results are presented in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

	<u>COMBINED SAMPLE (EXCLUDING 699 HOUSE)</u>	<u>699 HOUSE</u>
Expected Rate	15.85%	18.71%
Actual Rate	6.00%	28.00%
$\chi^2$	16.947	4.705

These results indicate that excluding the 699 House, the actual recidivism rate for the MHHI combined sample is 6% compared to the rate of 12% when the 699 House group is included. Not only that, the actual rate is significantly less than the expected rate when the 699 House sample is excluded. The difference was found to be significant when the 699 House sample was included, but the results were significant at the .05 level. However, when the actual rate for the combined sample excluding the 699 House sample is compared with the expected rate, the difference is also significant, but at the .001 level. Moreover, the difference between the actual rate of recidivism and the expected rate for the 699 House combined sample is also significant. For the 699 House sample, the actual rate of recidivism is significantly greater than the expected rate.



What these results indicate is that the 699 House sample significantly increases the actual rate of recidivism for the MHHI sample. If this group is excluded from the analysis, the difference between the actual and expected recidivism rates is significantly higher than the results including this particular sample.





SUMMARY

In conclusion, the present research evaluation of the Massachusetts Halfway Houses Incorporated pre-release population for individuals released during 1977 and 1978 has found that their recidivism rates were lower than the comparison group of individuals released from walled institutions. Also, it was found that this difference was not due to selection factors. The expected rates of recidivism were much higher than the actual recidivism rates for all samples except the sample of individuals released from 699 House. MHHI pre-release program participants had statistically significantly lower rates of recidivism for 1977 releases and for the combined sample of 1977 and 1978 releases than their expected rates.



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